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DEPARTMENT FOR PRM AND EAP/MLS
BANGKOK FOR REFUGEE COORDINATOR
GENEVA FOR RMA

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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [CB](#)
SUBJECT: CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT AGREES TO POSTPONE MONTAGNARD
DEPORTATION

11. (SBU) The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) went above and beyond expectation today when it decided to postpone deportation of 20 Montagnards. The 20 individuals were scheduled to be repatriated to Vietnam tomorrow, October 17, because they had been denied by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS). However, the 20 individuals are still within a USCIS 90-day window to submit new information on their cases that could merit a change in their determination, called a request for review.

12. (SBU) On October 16, the Ambassador sent a letter to Ministry of Foreign Affairs Secretary of State Long Visalo requesting that the RGC refrain from deporting the individuals until after the 90-day time limit expires on November 22. The letter was also sent to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Hor Namhong who gave the final approval for the deportation postponement. Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials were cooperative and sympathetic given the fact that the individuals on the deportation list are no longer considered refugees by the UNHCR and technically are subject to deportation under the Cambodian immigration law, as well as the Cambodia-Vietnam-UNHCR MOU. The RGC had already organized logistics with Vietnamese authorities and the UNHCR for both the departure from Cambodia and the repatriation into Vietnam. All plans were postponed at the last minute. Presumably, this caused some friction between the RGC and Vietnamese counterparts.

13. (SBU) Comment. This quick and cooperative action is a welcome development. In part, we believe the Cambodians are trying to be helpful as we move to implement the spring U.S. decision not to process separately in Cambodia those Montagnards screened out by UNHCR. As the immediate situation has passed, we can now focus on ensuring that all parties have the same understanding of how both Montagnards who arrived before May 1 and after May 1 are to be treated. End comment.
MUSSOMELI